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LETTER

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TO

A PATRIOT SENATOR,

INCLUDING

THE HEADS OF A BILL,

FOR A

CONSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE.

Sic tibi perſuade, me dies ac noctes nihil aliud agere, nihil curare, niſi ut mei cives *ſalvi liberique* ſint. Quòd ſi in hac curâ atque adminiſtratione *vita mihi ponenda ſit*, præclarè actum mecum putem.

CIC. Epiſt. ad Fam. IX. 24.

LONDON,

MDCCLXXXIII.

A

LETTER

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A PATRIOT SENATOR,

INCLUDING

THE HEADS OF A BILL

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CONSTITUTIONAL REPRESENTATION

OF THE PEOPLE.

BRITISH MUSEUM

LONDON,

MDCCLXXVIII.

A

LETTER

TO

A PATRIOT SENATOR.

AT our laſt interview, my dear friend, you requeſted me to explain to you in writing, *with more coolneſs*, you ſaid, *as well as perſpicuity, than either publick ſpeaking or private converſation will in general admit*, the ideas which had preſented themſelves to my mind on a *conſtitutional repreſentation* of the people in their Houſe of Commons; ideas, not formed by airy metaphyſical abſtractions, nor drawn from the republick of *Plato*, but reſulting from a calmer and more patient inquiry into the original frame and texture of our *Engliſh* government and the firſt elements of our civil polity, than many perhaps have had inclination, or than yourſelf, as you acknowledged, have had leiſure, to make: independently, therefore, of my general attention to your wiſhes, which have always been directed to ſome publick good, I haſten to comply

with your preſent requeſt; becauſe I could not but condemn myſelf as an ungrateful partaker of the benefits already enjoyed by *Engliſhmen*, if I ſuppreſſed ſuch of my opinions as might poſſibly be uſeful, on a queſtion the moſt important of any that ever was agitated in this nation. You agree with me in thinking it ſo; and, indeed, if *happineſs*, as far as our ſpecies can attain it, be the great end of all human eſtabliſhments; if no happineſs, becoming rational beings, can be taſted without *liberty*, which is alſo the parent of virtue; if true liberty, as none will deny, conſiſt in obedience to the *laws*; and if, as none ought to deny, it be the eſſence of law, *to be framed by the aſſent of thoſe, whoſe property, freedom, and lives it may affect*; there cannot be an object more noble when contemplated, more animating when purſued, or more beneficial when attained, than the reſtoration of our fellow-citizens to a due ſhare in the ſtructure of thoſe laws, by obeying which alone they can become firm in freedom and ſecure in felicity. Of all taſks that can be undertaken by mortals, this is clearly the greateſt and the beſt, and has the ſtrongeſt claim to the daily and nightly labours of genuine patriots; for ſuch there are among us, whatever may be aſſerted or inſinuated by the ſplenetick or malignant; who, meaſuring the reſt of mankind by their own narrow ſouls, attempt to confound all diſtinction between probity and baſeneſs, and, becauſe they are ſordid or lazy themſelves, will allow no one elſe to be generouſly active.

I turn

I turn with delight from them to you, from thoſe who impudently deny, to him who nobly proves, the exiſtence of diſintereſted virtue; and I proceed to lay a foundation for my opinions on *principles* which cannot juſtly be diſputed; but, indiſputable as thoſe principles appear to my own reaſon, I have ſo much reſpect for the unbiaſſed reaſon of others, and know ſo well the propenſity of mankind, through obſtinacy or caprice, but chiefly through ſelf-love, to diſſent from their fellow-creatures, that I will abſtain from all diſquiſitions concerning the original formation of ſociety, the natural equality of men, and the obligation of laws, thinking it ſafer and more prudent to argue from *the conſtitution itſelf*, which if we are virtuous enough to reſtore, we may be well ſatisfied, without conceiving ourſelves wiſe enough to improve it. Men are never ſo apt to diſagree as when they run into abſtractions, and ſpin threads ſo ſubtile, as to elude the ordinary powers of intellect: hence, if we ſuffer ourſelves to reaſon from what each of us may think the ſpirit of univerſal government and the tranſcendental rights of our ſpecies, each will have a little conſtitution of his own to produce, as if it were the model of a new bridge, or the plan of a publick edifice, and will be ready not only to contend, but even to quarrel, in ſupport of the preference due to it; while, by arguing from the rules and maxims tranſmitted to us by our forefathers, recorded in our venerable archives, and unfolded by writers of approved authority, by a

SELDEN,

SELDEN, a HALE, or a SOMERS, we are always prepared with this anſwer to cavillers—" Such is *the* " *conſtitutional* or publick *law* of our country, *than* " *which no individual muſt eſteem himſelf wiſer:*" of all political writing, political ſpeaking, political acting, this ought ever to be the baſis; and the line of old ENNIUS,

Moribus antiquis ſtat res Romana,

ought to be adopted and cheriſhed by *Engliſhmen* with as much zeal, as if it had deſcended from heaven. The friends of the people know not what they loſe, when they abandon this vantage-ground, on which I am anxious to place them; for nothing can be conceived more favourable to their deareſt rights than the common and publick law of *England*, which neither the craftineſs of the TUDORS, nor the tyranny of the STUARTS, could wholly ſuperſede or abrogate. To this great ſtandard I cheerfully appeal with the reſpectable author of the Letter to Mr. *Sinclair*, and, adopting all his juſt reaſoning in regard to the old *Gothick* edifice which we inherit, am able to prove, that its ancient gates are already ſufficiently large to admit *every independent man in the realm*; but he has raiſed in his own mind an airy caſtle, which he miſcalls the venerable fabrick of the conſtitution: and that is the phantaſm, by which, with the pureſt intentions, he deludes himſelf, while the deſerved fame of his integrity may contribute to the deluſion of others. As to the men who ſtupidly ſuppoſe, or baſely pretend to

 ſuppoſe,

ſuppoſe, that *the conſtitution* means only *the preſent ſtate of things*, whatever it may be, and thence infer that no alteration ſhould be made in it, I can neither check my indignation at their childiſh folly or diſhoneſt ſophiſtry, nor truſt myſelf with expreſſing it, leſt I ſhould tell them too many ungentle and unpalatable truths.

No writer in our language has, in my opinion, reduced the ſubject before us into a ſmaller compaſs, or explained it with more force and perſpicuity, than BLACKSTONE; and, if his name ſhould not carry with it an abſolute *authority*, yet I will not ſcruple to cite it *ad verecundiam* before any man, or ſet of men, now living. I have another motive for producing on all occaſions with pleaſure and triumph the popular paſſages in his ineſtimable works, becauſe his own ſyſtem of government was by no means democratical, and nothing but full conviction could have induced him, againſt his inclination and his intereſt, to advance principles, that had a tendency to diminiſh the regal or ariſtocratical power. Take his own words, than which none more clear or elegant could eaſily be found, and either acquieſce in his reaſoning, or produce better from an author of equal dignity. "In "all conſtitutions abſolutely popular, or in *the demo-* "*cratical part of any mixed ſtate*, the authority of the "people in the management of publick concerns is "exerciſed by vote or ſuffrage: in *little republicks* that "ſuffrage has uſually been given in perſon *by every* "*individual freeman of the ſtate*; but in ENGLAND,

"where

" where it is impracticable for *all* the freemen of the " nation to debate and give their voices in a col- " lective body, *they* do it by repreſentation; and, of " courſe, in this kingdom, the authority of the people " is exerted in the choice of repreſentatives to ſit in " the Houſe of Commons. It is therefore a matter " of no ſmall conſequence to the publick, to ſtate with " clearneſs and impartiality what perſons have, or " have not, the privilege of giving their voices in the " choice of theſe repreſentatives."

Thus he begins his tract entitled, *Conſiderations on Copyholders*; and the remainder of his exordium he has interwoven, with a little variation, into that chapter of his *Commentaries*, where he treats of *the Parliament*; from which I proceed to tranſcribe as much as relates to the point immediately before me. " The true rea- " ſon of requiring any qualification, with regard to " *property*, in voters, is, to exclude ſuch perſons as are " in *ſo mean a ſituation* that they are *eſteemed* to have " *no will of their own*. If theſe perſons had votes, " they would be tempted to diſpoſe of them under " ſome undue influence or other: this would give a " great, an artful, or a wealthy man a larger ſhare in " elections than is conſiſtent with general liberty. If " it were probable, that every man would give his " vote freely and without influence of any kind, then, " upon the true theory and genuine principles of " liberty, *every* member of the community, *however* " *poor*, ſhould have a vote in electing thoſe delegates,

" to

" *to whoſe charge is committed the diſpoſal of his pro-*
" *perty, his liberty, and his life*; but, ſince that can
" hardly be expected in perſons of *indigent* fortunes,
" or ſuch as are *under the immediate dominion of others*,
" all popular ſtates have been obliged to eſtabliſh cer-
" tain qualifications; whereby ſome, who are *ſuſpected*
" *to have no will of their own*, are excluded from
" voting, in order to ſet other individuals, *whoſe wills*
" *may be ſuppoſed independent*, more thoroughly upon
" a level with each other; and this conſtitution of
" ſuffrages is framed upon a wiſer principle than
" either of the methods of voting by *centuries*, or by
" *tribes*, among the ROMANS: the laws paſſed by
" the former method had uſually too great a tendency
" to aggrandize the patricians or rich nobles, and
" thoſe by the latter had too much of a levelling
" principle. Our conſtitution ſteers between the two
" extremes: *only ſuch are entirely excluded as* CAN
" *have no will of their own*. There is hardly a *free*
" *agent* to be found, but what is *entitled* to a vote in
" ſome place or other in the kingdom. This is the
" *ſpirit* of the conſtitution; not that I aſſert it is *in fact*
" quite ſo perfect as I have here endeavoured to de-
" ſcribe it; for, if any alteration might be wiſhed or
" ſuggeſted in the preſent frame of parliaments, it
" ſhould be *in favour of a more complete repreſentation*
" *of the people.*"

Such is the doctrine of a moſt accompliſhed lawyer, but no unambitious man, who ſeems reluctantly to

have diſcloſed truths, which he could not decently conceal; and it appears from the guarded manner with which he conſtantly writes, that he had often more in his mind than he thought it prudent to expreſs: this is the true key to the political parts of his admirable writings, from which infinite advantage may be drawn to the cauſe of conſtitutional freedom, if we conſtrue liberally ſuch paſſages as favour, and ſtrictly ſuch as oppoſe, it.

The ſum of his opinions on the right of voting for delegates in parliament is plainly this: "That the "true ſpirit of our conſtitution excludes no indivi- "dual member of the community, who can be pre- "ſumed to have a will of his own;" nor is this a new doctrine, but capable of proof from authorities ſo high that they cannot be reſiſted, and ſo numerous, that, if they were ſelected and arranged, they would fill a volume. Let me refer you to one or two of the many reſpectable writers, whoſe names crowd upon me, whenever I take refuge under authority, not from the weakneſs of natural reaſon, but from the pertinacity of thoſe who will not liſten to her voice.

LAMBARD, who was no zealot of a party, nor actuated by any factious motive, but a cool, diligent, and induſtrious antiquary, traces the origin of parliaments, in his book entitled *Archion*, from the old *Germans* through the *Saxon* and *Norman* governments to the times approaching his own; and cites a number of hiſtories and records, in which ſuch words

of

of *univerſality* are uſed, as clearly demonſtrate that *all the commonalty* of the realm had, what they certainly have not forfeited and could not ſurrender, an equal ſhare in the legiſlature. " De majoribus rebus con-" ſultant *omnes*," ſays TACITUS: " *ealra* witena," ſay the SAXON princes; " convocavit clerum *et populum*," ſays M. PARIS of HENRY III. and again, " *omnes* " clericos *et laicos totius* regni;" which words are alſo uſed in 4 WILLIAM I. l. 58. " *tote la commune*," ſays the ſtatute 14 EDWARD II. and, if theſe authorities were not ſufficient, a thouſand more might eaſily be adduced to warrant the concluſion, which *Lambard* forcibly draws; " that *every* man is ſaid *to be bound* " by that which doth paſs from the parliament; be-" cauſe *every* man, *from the higheſt to the loweſt*, " is there either in perſon or *by procuration*." I cannot refrain from adding a very ſtrong paſſage from Lord Chancellor WEST's *Inquiry into the Origin and Manner of creating Peers:* " It is no won-" der," ſays that learned writer, " that it was always " thought neceſſary, as well as reaſonable, to conſult " *the whole kingdom* in parliament upon all affairs and " demands which were extra-feudal and of a general " concern; and therefore, that great king EDWARD " I. was ſo ſenſible of the juſtice of this way of pro-" ceeding, that he inſerted in his writs of ſummons to " parliament, as *a firſt principle of law*, and as his rea-" ſon for ſummoning parliaments, *That in every affair*,

" *which related to the* whole *kingdom, the conſent of the* " whole *kingdom ought to be required* *."

Equality in the legiſlative power, and ſubordination to the executive, is in truth the grand principle of the *Engliſh* conſtitution; a principle, on which the peace, freedom, glory, and rational happineſs of the community entirely depend, and for which that community, if they have any love for peace, if they have any love for freedom, if they have any love for glory, if they ſet any value on rational happineſs, ought ſtrenuouſly and unanimouſly to labour.

But is the propoſition in *Lambard* true, you will aſk, to its full extent; " that *all the commonalty of the* " *realm, from the higheſt to the loweſt*, have a right of " ſending deputies to parliament?" So true, I anſwer, that every man, who has life and freedom to loſe, ſhould in ſtrictneſs aſſent to thoſe poſitive laws, by which his life and freedom may be affected; but there is an exception to the rule, which ſerves to illuſtrate and prove it. Such perſons only are excluded from voting as, *by reaſon of their indigence, can have no will of their own*; but all are admitted, who can furniſh themſelves by property or honeſt induſtry with the neceſſaries of life; *and may conſequently be, if they pleaſe*, to uſe the words of BLACKSTONE, *independent men*. Now every man muſt be *preſumed* to have a will of his own, until that preſumption be repelled by *poſitive*

* " Lex juſtiſſima, ut quod *omnes* tangit ab *omnibus* approbetur," are the original words.

proof,

proof, or by *a preſumption of the higheſt order*, which is equivalent to ſuch proof; and of this violent preſumption, affecting an entire claſs of ſubjects, I know but one inſtance ſince the abolition or extinction of villenage; namely, that of *perſons actually receiving or demanding relief for their daily ſupport from the charity of the publick or of individuals*. If any copyholders literally held their lands precariouſly *at the will of the lord*, they too muſt be excluded; but *the cuſtom of the manor*, which limits and fixes that will, preſerves their right with their liberty, and keeps them in the claſs of citizens or free members of the ſtate.

Among thoſe, whom the principles of the conſtitution admit to the right of ſuffrage, *becauſe they may be independent if they pleaſe*, numbers indeed of every rank, from the peaſant to the peer, will be ſlaviſh and abject in a deplorable degree; but of this diſpoſition, which cannot eaſily be proved, no human laws can take notice; nor is there any other meaſure of a free or a ſervile ſpirit in ſuch men (ſince great or ſmall property is a very falſe one) than that, which no human power can aſcertain, the ſtrength or weakneſs of their minds in being contented or diſſatisfied with their ſtation.

If *Sempronius* live happy on the produce of a ſmall farm or the profits of an honeſt trade, without a wiſh to exchange his homely cottage or little parlour for the glare of wealth and the ſplendid ſervitude of an ambitious life, who ſhall be raſh and daring enough

to

to pronounce him a *dependent* man? And, if *Titius*, with his long rental and venerable terriers, have an eſtabliſhment to which his yearly thouſands are inadequate, and, ſtunned with the clamour of creditors, while the din of judgements and foreclоſures rings in his ears to complete the harmony, pants for thouſands more to ſupply his conſtant expenſes, which habit has rendered almoſt neceſſary to his exiſtence, who ſhall be abſurd enough to call him *independent?* How unjuſt would it be to *ſuſpect* the former of having *no will of his own*, and therefore to deprive him of the moſt valuable privilege; while the ſecond is *ſuppoſed* to have ſeveral *wills of his own* in the lower houſe, though he have none in fact even in the upper, where he votes for any miniſter on any queſtion!

Nor is there any rational diſtinction, as to dependence or independence, between property *perſonal* and *real:* if there be, it is in favour of perſonalty; ſince money will in a ſhort time procure land, but land cannot always, without great diſadvantage, be changed into money; and it is by money, that the neceſſaries and comforts of life are immediately obtained. They, who would argue againſt this opinion, muſt be ſoon reduced to abſurdities. Are ſtock-holders to any amount, are merchants or traders in the annual receipt of many hundreds, are leſſees for long terms, between whoſe intereſt and an abſolute fee ſimple the difference is hardly aſſignable, *perſons of indigent fortunes*, and *under the dominion of others?* Is the whole

a play upon words, and is no man *free* but the owner of a *freehold?* Or have they diſcovered, by ſome new logick, that *free agency* is predicable only of men who have a certain title to roods and acres; whilſt others, who have gold enough in their coffers to purchaſe ten times the value of the land, and often of the land-owners, if they were ſold at a *Turkiſh* market, are to be *eſteemed in ſo mean a ſituation as to have no will of their own?* Suppoſe a man deſirous of ſetting up a trade, or of ſtocking a farm, to inherit a ſmall freehold, and inſtantly to become an *elector* of *Britain*, a *citizen* in the large ſenſe of the word, and a *freeman* in the only true ſenſe, that is, *a perſon exempt from all laws to which he has not aſſented*: now if, wanting money to furniſh his ſhop or purchaſe ſtock, he ſell his land and hire a ſmall houſe, in which he can ſupport his family by diligence and parſimony, ſhall he be transformed in a moment, if he be not a member of ſome elective body, into a mere ſlave in the worſt ſenſe, that is, *a man abſolutely ſubject to the legiſlation of others without his conſent and without remedy?* Theſe concluſions are enormities in reaſoning, which you and I, who take no delight in monſters, will leave to ſuch as can enjoy them.

There ſeems to be as little ſolidity in the diſtinction commonly made between the *landed* and the *trading intereſts* of the nation, ſince it is not for a particular city or county, but for the whole extent of the realm and its dependencies, that members of parliament are authorized

authorized and required to make laws; and if any one of them were to conſider merely the narrow views and partialities of his own conſtituents, at the expenſe of the general good, he would betray the truſt repoſed in him by his country, and juſtly incur the cenſure of all; though he might perhaps be applauded by a few, who could not, or would not, underſtand, that every private convenience muſt yield to the publick felicity, and that their own good is in truth promoted ultimately by this very conceſſion. A partial intereſt ſubſiſting in a nation, diſtinct from the general proſperity, ſeems a ſtrange abſurdity in a conſtitution; for every particular good enjoyed in ſociety ſhould be cheriſhed and ſupported by the whole community, if it be advantageous to the whole; and, if prejudicial, it ſhould not be enjoyed at all: but it is yet more unaccountable, that the intereſt of *commerce*, which alone can make this nation abundant in wealth, exalted in power, ſplendid in glory, and conſequently ſecure in tranquillity, ſhould need ſeparate patrons againſt the proprietors of land, who feel inconvenience from the leaſt decline of trade, and muſt be wounded to the quick by a total extinction of it.

I know, indeed, and lament, that ſuch partialities actually exiſt; but I deny that the conſtitution takes notice of them, and inſiſt that they ought to be diſcountenanced, inſtead of being fomented.

I am perfectly aware, that all this would by ſome be thought paradoxical, or at leaſt too bold an attack upon

upon received opinions: but *I muſt be juſtified*, as our Chancellors ſay, *by my own conſcience*, and, if I reaſon amiſs, give me at leaſt the pleaſure, which every lover of truth muſt eſteem a very high one, of being fairly confuted.

I am aware too, that, in the times of feudal narrowneſs, when money was extremely ſcarce, and perſonal chattels little regarded, almoſt every elector in the kingdom was a landholder; but his landed property was *accidental* only, not *eſſential* to his right of voting, which ſtood on a firmer baſis; and, if an idea of independent men without land had then prevailed, it is impoſſible to doubt, that ſuch men alſo would have been admitted to their ſhare in legiſlation: but that narrowneſs is now at an end, and the natural good ſenſe of mankind has ſo far triumphed over it, that even our courts of private law conſider perſonal poſſeſſions in an equal light with realty, though a ſtrong tincture of feudal proviſions may be found in our preſent ſyſtem, and that without inconvenience, ſince it is ſufficient for peace and ſecurity, if the rules of property, from whatever ſource they are derived, be generally underſtood and invariably uniform. There is not the ſame reaſon for retaining the miſerable dregs of *Norman* polity in the great ſyſtem of legiſlature; and it was, indeed, ſoon diſcovered, that trade was our true buſineſs, and war only neceſſary at ſea for the protection of it; that the civil power was fully adequate to internal defence; and that the well-

connected chain of tenancies, meſnalties, and lordſhips paramount, which might have been expedient in ſecuring conqueſts, was no longer of uſe in a ſettled government. Even in early reigns, when commerce was yet in her cradle, the folly and injuſtice of excluding merchants and tradeſmen from the right of ſending deputies to the legiſlative aſſembly was ſo glaring, that when the crown exerciſed rather wantonly the power of erecting *boroughs*, the nation winked at a ſtretch of prerogative otherwiſe unwarrantable. That, that was the moment, had the people been wiſe enough to ſeize it, for correcting the vitiated *form* of the conſtitution by the genuine *ſpirit* of it, and recognizing at once that univerſal right, which every free man of the realm ought to have enjoyed, but which no power ought partially to have conferred: and here let me obſerve, that, if our countrymen have any regard for the purity of their language, which has a greater effect on their liberties than they may imagine, they will ceaſe to miſapply the word *franchiſe*, which means *a royal privilege ſubſiſting by grant in the hands of a ſubject*, to the ſacred right of ſending delegates to parliament, which the crown can neither give nor take away.

As to the ſtatute of HENRY VI. which is ridiculouſly ſuppoſed by ſome to have fixed what they call *the conſtitution*, I only wiſh that ancient hiſtory had preſerved, what modern hiſtory muſt have branded with infamy, the names of thoſe who adviſed ſuch a law,

law, of thoſe who prepared the bill, and of thoſe who ſupported it. The true deſign and dark policy of it, which had, I confeſs, eſcaped me, were lately detected in my hearing by one of the wiſeſt and moſt diſcerning men living, who remarked, "that the ſtatute for diſ-"qualifying all voters for counties, who had not free-"holds of twenty pounds a year, according to the "value of money at that time, was *immediately* fol-"lowed by another, compelling *labourers* and *arti-"ficers*, multitudes of whom were freeholders under "that value, to work at certain low wages on pain "of a heavy fine." "If I recollect," ſaid a learned man in the company, who had accurately ſtudied our hiſtory and conſtitution, "the ſtatute of *labourers* "preceded that of elections by a year or two." "Then," ſaid the other, "it was feared, that the "lower freeholders, who were injured by a cruel law, "would ſhow their juſt reſentment by voting againſt "the ſupporters of it; and the ſureſt way of prevent-"ing them was to diſqualify them all at a blow." "You are both right," ſaid I; "for a *temporary* act "concerning workmen and artificers paſſed in the "*ſixth* of that reign, which it was thought politick to "make *perpetual* in the *eighth*, and the diſqualifying "ſtatute was contrived to intervene." We all con-curred in expreſſing our wonder, that ſo violent an abuſe of power did not provoke, what it would un-queſtionably have juſtified, a general inſurrection.

By the loſs of ſo many occaſions to unfold and bring to ripeneſs the true principles of legiſlation, our ſyſtem has become enormous and deformed in a woful degree: it is, indeed, little more than a tawdry piece of irregular patchwork, in which the many-coloured ſhreds and remnants of the *family*, *treaſury*, and *market*, boroughs, *bear a quadruple proportion*, we are told, to the uniform but narrow ſlips of the counties. This enormity has been ſo clearly diſplayed, and ſo forcibly deplored, that the ſubject is totally exhauſted: nor are the evils reſulting from it leſs injurious to the good ſenſe and good manners of the nation. Seats in parliament are become as much the property of the nobles and rich commoners as their hunting-ſeats; and we frequently hear both men and women talk of *boroughs on their eſtates* with as much compoſure, as if they were ſpeaking of *burrows* in a warren. Hence it is, that a man of large property, however or whereſoever acquired, ſteps as regularly into the houſe of commons as into his chariot: hence the gold of *Indian* princes, or of any foreign power, may eaſily have the ſame influence in our great national council, as that of *Philip* had in the aſſembly at *Athens*; whilſt any *Engliſh* town may be *taken*, as *Philip* himſelf uſed to aſſert of the *Grecian* towns, *into which you may introduce an aſs laden with gold*. I ſay nothing of the baneful aſcendant, which the treaſury has too long maintained, in conſequence of this deplorable ſyſtem, to the ſubverſion of all that is valu-

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able and honourable among men. I know that you could never think of this calamity with patience; and I remember, that, when you began to read, with high expectation of pleaſure, a book, which muſt be good, becauſe every man commends it, you left it in the middle of the preface, where you were told, that "the crown found it impoſſible to carry on "the buſineſs of government without a majority of "voices in the houſe of commons;" a poſition, which is hardly neceſſary to diſcuſs or confute. The crown cannot be all-powerful without an all-obeying parliament; but no free parliament would thwart or condemn any meaſures, which appeared to them juſt and ſalutary.

For all theſe miſchiefs, ſo deeply felt, and ſo generally acknowledged, what, you will aſk, is the regular, peaceful, and certain remedy? I know but one: *let us reſtore our genuine and recorded Conſtitution.* To what elſe can we appeal? To reaſon?--But reaſon, or what is called ſo, is different in different men; and, without a determinate ſtandard, there will be no end of peeviſh ſquabbles and vexatious wrangling. As to palliatives and compromiſes, they will either be inadequate to the end, or add evil to evil.

Thoſe, who, by the *inequality* of repreſentation, mean chiefly the diſproportion of members for counties to thoſe for boroughs, and who are pleaſed to aſſume that the former are the only true friends of liberty and of the people, which I am by no means in-

clined to allow, have deviſed an infallible ſpecifick, in their opinion, for all diſtempers of the ſtate: but the *bare* adding of an hundred county-members, by way of ſweetener for the corruption of the rotten boroughs, would be like perfuming a fetid apartment with muſk or ambregris, when the obvious way to make it pure and healthful would be, to remove at once the cauſe of the ſtench, and to let in freſh air by opening the doors and windows.

Fifty boroughs, indeed, are by ſome propoſed to be extinguiſhed; and that, it muſt be confeſſed, would be a very ſubſtantial improvement, and a pretty full reſtoration of the balance; but, unleſs the members of the annihilated boroughs be allowed to vote ſomewhere, the meaſure would involve a palpable injuſtice; and, after all, the want of *univerſality* in the right of voting is a greater evil than the want of *equality* between the ſuppoſed *intereſts*. Other plans, all far ſhort of perfection, have been ſuggeſted by ſeveral warm and able friends of the people; among whom one of the warmeſt and ableſt has very ingeniouſly ingrafted on a moſt liberal and extenſive ſyſtem of voting a new mode of taxation, which, however eligible in itſelf by way of commutation for other taxes, ought clearly, in my humble opinion, to be made a diſtinct legiſlative proviſion, and wholly unconnected with the preſent ſcheme of reformation, which it would only ſerve to render complex and open to diſſenſion.

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The bill prepared by the duke of RICHMOND, to whom I have barely the honour of being known, I have not yet had an opportunity of ſeeing; and muſt therefore claim all the praiſe, or ſubmit to all the cenſure, that my own plan may deſerve. I can have no intereſt in flattering the duke; and, if I had, he could not have a better ſecurity againſt being over-praiſed by me; but I will not, through fear of being thought a flatterer, with-hold my juſt tribute of applauſe to a man of his abilities as well as rank, who both profeſſes and proves himſelf a ſincere and ſtrenuous friend to the principles of the conſtitution, and to that univerſal right of ſuffrage, which they ſo clearly recognize.

Without more preliminaries, I ſend you my ſyſtem in the form of a bill, though not drawn with all the clerical exactneſs to which it may eaſily be reduced, if it ſhould meet your private approbation, and if your natural modeſty ſhould not deter you from giving it your publick ſupport.

It is not recited in the preamble, that *annual* parliaments were a part of the old conſtitution, becauſe I have, in truth, no ſatisfactory evidence that they were ſo; but I ſee no objection to them, which the ſubſequent proviſions in the bill may not wholly remove: if *triennial* elections would diminiſh corruption, *annual* elections would deſtroy it.

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B I L L.

WHEREAS the liberty of the people of Great Britain, *on which depend as well their private happineſs as the general proſperity and ſafety of this realm, conſiſts in a due obedience to laws enacted by the conſent of their actual repreſentatives or delegates in the houſe of commons; and whereas, by the principles of the conſtitution, none ought to be excluded from the right of electing thoſe repreſentatives, but ſuch as, through extreme indigence, are neceſſarily dependent on the will of others; and whereas it appears, that the form of the conſtitution, in regard to the qualifications of perſons admitted to vote at elections for ſuch parliamentary delegates, has in a courſe of ages deviated ſo widely from the true ſpirit of it, that a more extenſive repreſentation of the people in the legiſlative aſſembly is become eſſentially neceſſary to the preſervation of our excellent eſtabliſhment in its juſt temperature and harmony, as well as to the obligatory power of the laws and the juriſdiction of courts, civil and criminal; And whereas frequent elections*

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of members to ſerve in parliament are the only ſecurity, which the people of Great Britain *can have, for the full enjoyment of their conſtitutional rights and the fidelity of their repreſentatives, Be it therefore enacted,*

1. THAT, *on the firſt day of* September *in every year, the clerk of the crown in chancery ſhall iſſue writs to the ſheriffs of all the counties in* GREAT BRITAIN *and the City of* LONDON, *for the election of members to ſerve in a new parliament, as repreſentatives of the whole nation.*

2. THAT *an equal number of ſuch national repreſentatives ſhall be choſen in every ſhire and county of* GREAT BRITAIN *and the City of* LONDON, *ſo as not to exceed* ſix hundred; *and that, for the purpoſe of election, the iſle of* Angleſey *be annexed to the county of* Flint, *and the county of* Rutland *to that of* Huntingdon.

NOTE: The *wards* in the City of *London* correſpond to the *hundreds* in counties.

3. THAT *every ſheriff ſhall attend in perſon at the next county-court after the receipt of the writ, to be holden at the county-town, and ſhall there ſet down in writing the names and deſcriptions of ſuch candidates as ſhall be nominated by a ſhow of hands, which names he ſhall cauſe to be diſtinctly printed in order as they were propoſed.*

4. THAT, *within three days after ſuch nomination, the ſheriff of each county ſhall ſend his precept under ſeal to the high conſtable, reeve, or bailiff of every lathe, rape, wapentake, hundred, or liberty, together with as*

many printed lists of the candidates as he shall have computed inhabitants, not receiving alms or charity, within such wapentake, hundred, or liberty, commanding such high constable or bailiff to proceed, at the next hundred-court, &c. *after the receipt of the precept, to take the votes of all electors resident within his bailiwick.*

5. THAT *every high constable or bailiff of a wapentake, hundred, or liberty, shall be a substantial householder, and shall be chosen by the inhabitants of his hundred or liberty, at a court for that purpose to be holden at the principal tithing or town within or near the same.*

6. THAT *a county-court shall for this purpose be holden in the* second *week, and a hundred-court,* &c. *in the* fourth *week, of* September, *on* Monday *morning, throughout the realm.*

7. THAT, *on the* Sunday *next preceding the said hundred-court for the month of* September, *every elector, (except the people called* Quakers) *intending to vote on the following day, shall attend divine service in the cathedral, parish-church, meeting-house, or other lawful place of worship, nearest to his own usual abode; and that the bishop, rector, curate, or other minister there officiating, shall, after service performed, deliver a clear and solemn discourse on the judgements of Almighty* GOD *denounced against perjured men; and that, after the benediction pronounced, the minister shall go to the altar, where, having read a prayer to be for that occasion framed, he shall administer the following oath to all such as shall devoutly present themselves for that purpose.*

I, A. B.

I, A. B. do ſincerely and ſolemnly ſwear, that I am a *Britiſh* ſubject, of the full age of twenty-one years; that I am {*unmarried* / *married*}; and have in my own right, without any ſecret truſt, voluntary gift, corrupt bargain, or fraudulent agreement, a clear and certain income of {*twenty-five* / *fifty*} pounds a year, either ariſing from my own property, or acquired by my honeſt induſtry, for which I am in no way dependent upon any perſon or perſons; and I do, with like ſincerity and ſolemnity, alſo ſwear, that I will give my vote for ſuch members to ſerve in parliament, as I ſhall approve, freely by my own will, without influence or control, hope of gain or fear of loſs, and without any reward, patronage, ſupport, or emolument, received or expected, directly or indirectly, of any kind whatever, ſo help me GOD!

And that the ſaid biſhop, rector, curate, or miniſter ſhall give to every ſuch elector a certificate, ſigned and ſealed by himſelf, of his having duly taken the oath above preſcribed.

8. THAT *the perſons called* Quakers *ſhall make a ſolemn affirmation before a juſtice of the peace for the county in which they ſhall vote, in the ſame form with the preceding oath; and that ſuch juſtice ſhall give them the like certificates of their having ſo affirmed.*

9. THAT *every ſheriff, and high conſtable or bailiff, before he proceeds to act in obedience to the writ and precept above mentioned, ſhall publickly and ſolemnly take this oath in his reſpective court:*

I, A. B. do ſwear, that I will faithfully and impartially execute the truſt repoſed in me as preſiding-officer at the enſuing election of members to ſerve in the next parliament, and will make a true return of the candidates elected, and that without favour or affection, prejudice or malice, ſo help me GOD!

10. THAT *the high conſtable or bailiff, preſiding in every hundred-court, &c. ſhall deliver to every elector producing his certificate of qualification to be filed in the ſaid court, one of the printed liſts of candidates ſent with the ſheriff's precept, which elector ſhall forthwith privately draw a line with a pen under the name of every candidate for whom he pleaſes to vote, or add in writing the names of any others, whom he may prefer, and ſhall redeliver the liſt ſo marked to the high conſtable or bailiff, who ſhall immediately file the ſame; and, if ſuch elector be illiterate, he may privately mention to the high conſtable or bailiff, who ſhall mark the liſt for him, the names of thoſe whom he ſhall chuſe.*

11. THAT, *on the day ſucceeding the election in each hundred or liberty, the high conſtable or bailiff of the ſame ſhall return the precept to the ſheriff, together with*

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the names of the perſons elected by a majority of votes, and all the certificates and liſts filed.

12. THAT, *at the county-court to be holden in the firſt week of* October, *the ſheriff ſhall publiſh the names of the candidates elected by a majority of votes in all the hundreds and liberties of his county collectively, who ſhall be the members of the new parliament; and that the ſheriff ſhall then return the whole, together with the writ, to the clerk of the crown in chancery.*

13. THAT *the parliament ſo elected ſhall ſit of courſe in the ſecond week of* November, *and be regularly at an end in the laſt week of* Auguſt, *in every year.*

14. THAT, *if any of the liſts filed in any hundred-court,* &c. *ſhall have more names marked on them than allowed by this act to be choſen in the county, the firſt names in ſuch liſt, amounting to the legal number, ſhall be thoſe duly choſen, and the reſt ſhall be expunged.*

15. THAT *the expenſes of elections ſhall be borne by the counties in which they are holden; and that no candidate ſhall be at any expenſe whatever in opening houſes,* &c. *on pain of diſqualification for a whole parliament.*

16. THAT *every member, having taken his ſeat in parliament, ſhall, before he vote or ſpeak on any queſtion whatever, take the following oath in his place, the ſpeaker being uncovered, and ſilence by him proclaimed.*

I, A. B.

I, A.B. do ſincerely and ſolemnly ſwear, that I am {*unmarried* / *married*}; and have in my own right, without any ſecret truſt, voluntary gift, corrupt bargain, or fraudulent agreement, a clear and certain income of {*three* / *ſix*} hundred pounds a year, for which I am in no way dependent on any perſon or perſons; and that I will faithfully and honeſtly diſcharge my duty as a member of this parliament, to the beſt of my knowledge and judgement, and will not give a vote on any occaſion through undue influence or control of any kind, ſo help me GOD!

17. THAT *the ſheriff of each county, and the high conſtable or bailiff of each wapentake, hundred, or liberty, in the realm, ſhall, at his next court to be holden after every ſeſſion of parliament, diſtinctly read and proclaim all the publick acts paſſed in the ſaid ſeſſion, and that copies of ſuch acts ſhall be ſent to them for that purpoſe, as ſoon as they can be conveniently printed, which copies ſhall be repoſited among the proceedings of the ſaid hundred and county courts,* &c. *ſo as to be acceſſible at any time to the inhabitants of the ſaid hundreds or counties.*

18. THAT *every tenant at will, or from year to year, who ſhall be menaced by his landlord, or by the agent, general or ſpecial, of ſuch landlord, in order to command his vote at an election, may defend an ejectment by proving*

ing ſuch menace to the ſatisfaction of a jury, and ſhall not only have full coſts, but ſhall hold his eſtate rent-free for ſeven years.

19. THAT *any perſon whatever, who ſhall menace any elector with loſs of place or profit, in order to procure his vote, ſhall forfeit the ſum of five hundred pounds, half to the county, and half to the perſon menaced, or to any other perſon who ſhall ſue for it.*

20. THAT *perjury in any of the parties taking an oath preſcribed by this act, or ſubornation of the ſame by any perſon whatever, or forgery of a certificate of qualification, ſhall be felony puniſhable by impriſonment or hard labour for ſeven years, forfeiture to the county of goods and chattels, and perpetual diſqualification to elect or be elected; and that the crown ſhall have no power to remit the puniſhment.*

You cannot but have remarked, on reading the ſeveral clauſes of the bill, that it is grounded on the *principle* of admitting *every man* in the united kingdoms, *who may, if he pleaſes, be independent*, to a ſhare in the legiſlature; a principle, which I have proved to be fundamental in our genuine Conſtitution; and that, in regard to the mode of election, it has been my chief care to make as little change as poſſible in the old civil diviſion of the iſland. I have no claim to the praiſe of originality in my idea of chuſing all the members

members *in* the counties, but *for* the whole nation? it is not diſputed, that the number of county-members was anciently, before boroughs exiſted, indeterminate; and I glory in confeſſing, that I borrowed the hint of my plan from a paſſage in *The Hiſtory of the Common Law* by Sir MATTHEW HALE, a name, which I mention with honour and reverence. His words are theſe: "The laws of *William* I. were not "impoſed *ad libitum regis*, but were ſettled *per com-* "*mune concilium regni*; and poſſibly at that very time, "when *twelve out of every county* were returned to "aſcertain the Confeſſor's laws, as before is men-"tioned out of *Hoveden*, which appears to be AS SUF-"FICIENT AND EFFECTUAL A PARLIAMENT AS "EVER WAS HELD IN ENGLAND." He had before cited the original words of *Hoveden*, which are ſo remarkable and appoſite that I cannot forbear tranſlating them. "Twelve men, having been elected from "each county in the whole realm, *took a ſolemn oath*, "that they would proceed, as exactly as they were "able, in a ſtrait path, turning neither to the right "nor to the left, and would publiſh all their laws and "cuſtoms, nothing omitting, nothing adding, nothing "deceitfully changing." So great a number as *twelve* for each county in *Britain* might now be inconvenient, and would certainly be unneceſſary; but, as it would be eaſy to make *eighty* diviſions of the whole iſland, *ſeven* might juſtly be choſen in each, and *two* only would then be added to the preſent aggregate of members for the nation.

You will alſo have obſerved, that I have made little uſe of the *arithmetical* and *geometrical* reaſoning ſo much in faſhion; and I fairly own, that I find no other principle of *equality* in our conſtitution but that which is entirely *perſonal:* the apportioning of members to the populouſneſs and extent of *diſtricts* has, in truth, a tendency to that *partiality* of repreſentation, which, in my humble opinion, the conſtitution diſclaims. Had the *hundreds* and *liberties* been equal, or nearly ſo, and had every county contained an odd number of them, I ſhould, indeed, have propoſed, that a majority of votes ſhould carry each hundred, and a majority of hundreds each county; which would have been exactly the method of voting by tribes among the *Romans*; but the mode, which I now propoſe, will have a great and important advantage over elections *by particular diſtricts*; ſince it is an axiom, that *the greater is the number of voters, the leſs will be the facility of corrupting them*; and it would ſcarce be poſſible to corrupt *all the free inhabitants of a county.*

Objections, I know, will be raiſed to every clauſe in my bill; but I cannot ſuggeſt one, and I have repeatedly tried, which may not receive a ſolid and complete anſwer. The whole ſyſtem, it will be ſaid, is *democratical*, big with danger to publick peace, and evidently tending to a revolution, by giving to the people a greater ſhare of power than is conſiſtent with general tranquillity. Idle terrors! vain ſurmiſes! groundleſs apprehenſions! Good laws well executed,

and good meaſures well purſued, will ever preſerve the ſtate from the baſe projects of the turbulent or ambitious; and I cannot urge too frequently, that we are not to inquire what is the beſt form of government in the opinion of individuals or parties, but what ſhare of power the Conſtitution upon record actually gives reſpectively to the king, the nobles, and the people.

How! it will be exclaimed, would the people have *annual* elections? They know not what they aſk. It is only *towards the cloſe of a long parliament* that *We*, ſay the leaders of oppoſition, can form a compact phalanx againſt the influence of the Court. But *We*, ſay the nation, demand our old conſtitution, which we venerate: we know nothing of your oppoſition: we will protect ourſelves from the Court and from You. If you can only be perſuaded to diſcharge your duty at the *cloſe* of a parliament, be prepared to diſcharge it faithfully in the ſummer, or we will reject you diſgracefully in the autumn.

A violent clamour will be heard againſt the idea of admitting SCOTLAND to ſo large a ſhare in the legiſlature of *Britain*; but why ſhould not the *Scots* be as free and happy as ourſelves? Our only objection to a nation excelling like them in arts and in arms is their objection to liberty; but their country has produced firm patriots and virtuous citizens; and they will all be lovers of freedom, when they poſſeſs her and enjoy her charms: nevertheleſs, if the comparative populouſneſs of *North Britain* will not yet entitle it to the

ſhare

ſhare propoſed, *eight* or *nine* members, inſtead of *ſeven*, may for a time be choſen in each of the diviſions of *England* and *Wales*, and *one* or *two* more be elected in the liberty of *Weſtminſter*, as a mark of diſtinction to ſo conſiderable a part of the metropolis.

Another will warmly inſiſt, that new *oaths* and new *felonies* ought not to be introduced; that both are already far too numerous; and that my plan, of ſwearing the voters with all poſſible ſolemnity in a place of publick worſhip, is borrowed from the *Athenian* cuſtom, and would be an innovation among *Chriſtians*: but I inſiſt as warmly, that the number of bad laws ought not to prevent the introduction of good ones, and that *Chriſtian* nations ought to bluſh, if oaths, on the ſanction of which the fame, the property, the freedom of each individual may on many occaſions depend, were more ſolemnly adminiſtered at the altar of a heathen divinity than at that of the only true God, in all the blaze of light which it has pleaſed him to reveal. Thoſe, who deride all religion, and, for that reaſon, object to my plan, neither you nor I will condeſcend to anſwer. Nor are they, who declaim againſt *innovation*, as they call it, more worthy of notice; for (not to inſiſt that *renovation* alone is demanded) I aſk, if they were themſelves devoured by the ſcrophula, and refuſed to take *alteratives*, or even, in extremity, to uſe hemlock or apply cauteries, *becauſe they would not innovate in their conſtitutions*, who would not believe them to be madder than the maddeſt in *Bedlam?* Corruption is the poiſon, which infects all

the capillary veſſels and lymphatick ducts of the ſtate in all their various ramifications, threatening the whole maſs of blood with a mortal taint, and the whole ſurface of the body with ulcer and gangrene; yet corruption is a poiſon, which the law juſt propoſed, if the nation have virtue enough to ſee it duly executed, will wholly and for ever exterminate.

As to the *felonies*, in the laſt clauſe, I ſhould wiſh to make them *capital*, being perſuaded that the puniſhment would be no more than adequate to the crime; for what can be more atrocious than *perjury?* what more treaſonable than an uſurpation of a ſovereign right, which the *Athenians* juſtly puniſhed with death? but I cannot agree with Isæus, that *laws ſhould be framed with rigour and executed with mildneſs:* on the contrary, I am clearly of opinion, that, unleſs penal laws be mild, the miſtaken lenity of mankind will often prevent them from being executed at all; and, in every well-ordered ſtate, the puniſhment ought to follow the crime as invariably and certainly, as any effect in the ſyſtem of the univerſe follows its cauſe.

Others may think the plan too vaſt, and therefore impracticable; but (to admit for a moment what I ſhall ever after deny, ſince nothing is impracticable to induſtry and virtue) we muſt always remember the maxim of Cicero, that, "when we labour to attain "the ſummit of things, we may ſtop without diſho-"nour in the ſecond place, or even in the third." Let us reſtore our conſtitution, if not exactly, at leaſt by approximation.

"Oh!

" Oh! but the people (it is urged) are groſsly ig-
" norant, and ſhamefully abandoned. As rationally
" might *Phidias* have attempted to make a ſtatue of
" ſand, as a legiſlator to conſtitute a perfect ſtate with
" ſuch baſe materials. The many muſt be led, not
" followed; depreſſed, not advanced; protected, in-
" deed, but not conſulted." I anſwer, that, if the multitude are ignorant, they ſhould be inſtructed; if vitious, corrected; if incorrigible, puniſhed; that it were more generous to reform than to abuſe, more noble to enlighten, than to deſpiſe, them; that, after all, the ſeducers are more culpable than the ſeduced, as wickedneſs is more odious than weakneſs: but the objection proves too much; for, if it be juſt, the maſs of the people ought to have no ſhare in the legiſlature, the conſtitution ought to be diſſolved, and either an abſolute monarchy ſhould ſupply its place, or an oligarchy of the wiſe and rich, who might perhaps be ſoon as corrupt as the ignorant and poor. A very different opinion, however, was entertained of our populace by the candid, virtuous, and eloquent ANDREW FLETCHER of *Saltoun*, who admits, that " *England*
" has a commonalty not only ſurpaſſing all thoſe of
" that degree, which the world can now boaſt of, but
" alſo thoſe of all former ages, in courage, honeſty,
" good ſenſe, induſtry, and generoſity of temper;
" which advantages cannot, he ſays, be imputed to
" the climate, or to any other cauſe but the freedom
" of the government under which they live." Is this

majeſtick

majeſtick race to be left grazing like a herd in their ſcanty paſtures, with no happineſs worthy of reaſonable ſouls, and with no ſecurity even for their eaſe and comfort, but the intereſt which their herdſmen may take in preſerving their breed? For my own part, I have ſo habituated myſelf to conſider all men as from nature equal, that I never give alms to a beggar without reflecting, that nothing perhaps has prevented my receiving them from him, but the accidental difference between us in birth, connexions, and the culture of our minds; but, when I view the yeomen and traders of *England*, firm, intrepid, liberal, induſtrious, benevolent, and bearing on their very countenances a conſciouſneſs of dignity and freedom, I cannot help revering, as much as I love, a people ſuperior to the reſt of mortals. Their ignorance of their rights I lament; and their failings I deplore; but, were I not fully convinced, that the propoſed reformation would ſoon enlighten and improve them, and, by enſuring their liberty, reſtore their virtue, and promote their happineſs, I would never have oppoſed many friends, and poſſibly raiſed many enemies (to my ruin, perhaps, as far as a man with a ſmall independent fortune and a great independent ſpirit can be ruined) by writing thus freely on ſo delicate and momentous a ſubject. As to the *ſenſe* of the nation upon this great point, I perfectly agree with a reſpectable writer on the other ſide, that "it would be folly to aſk it;—that we know "it before it is aſked:" and I cannot help ſuſpecting

thoſe,

thoſe, who are loudeſt in calling for it, of a deſign to baffle the people by dividing them.

Am I then ſanguine and romantick enough, you will aſk, to imagine that my bill will paſs, or any bill equally pure? No; but it is an experiment worthy to be tried. I am aware, that the ſtatute of *intails*, which favoured the *greater* ariſtocratical aſſembly, could never be formally repealed; and I cannot conceive, that the members of a houſe, which now contains, moſt unconſtitutionally, a *ſecond* ariſtocracy, will eaſily conſent to ſhake thoſe ſeats, "where they and their an-"ceſtors have had a ſort of *hereditary tenure* for them-"ſelves, or for the friends whom they recommend." Their ideas are as incorrect as their principle is unſound; for *power always follows property*; and, whatever alteration be made, the rich will ever enjoy as much influence at leaſt as is conſiſtent with the general happineſs. The misfortune is, that no *fiction* of law, how conſiſtent ſoever with equity, will ſupply a remedy to this evil; no *common recovery* will reſtore the nation to rights, of which their very delegates conſpire to deprive them. The grand expedient of returning a new ſet of members to the next parliament cannot be applied by thoſe, whoſe grievance it is, that they have no ſuffrage. May the Power, who rules all rulers, forbid any mad recourſe, in this ſtate of deſperation, to the laſt and worſt of remedies! The attempt muſt be as vain as it would be frantick; and the certain conſequence would be a military deſpotiſm!

deſpotiſm! To avert ſuch a calamity, if the loſs of one life could avert it, I would cheerfully precipitate myſelf on the pikes or bayonets of my countrymen, and ſhould think my laſt dying moment happy, if it prevented them from living miſerable.

Thus have I delivered my ſentiments, as you deſired, with moderation, and, I hope, with clearneſs: if you diſſent from me in part or in the whole, I ſhall anxiouſly wiſh to be fully refuted; but, if my ideas appear to you both rational and ſalutary, you have my free permiſſion to make them publick; and, as I have no baſe fear of incurring perſonal inconvenience, nor idle hope of gaining approbation, you are at perfect liberty to add or to ſuppreſs that uſeleſs name, by which I ſhall take a ſincere pleaſure in ſubſcribing myſelf, according to the modern form, your faithful friend, unleſs you chuſe, that, with ancient ſimplicity, I ſhould bid you

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FAREWELL!